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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
8 December 1954

NAVY review

TO: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: Comment on press report of Communist submarines
in Far East waters

A United Press story of 8 December states that US pilots and naval vessels have encountered Communist submarines in the East China Sea, the Sea of Japan and the northwest Pacific. The article quotes "unofficial Navy sources" as stating that the submarines have done everything possible to avoid identification and, according to the article, apparently operated "under full wartime conditions." A Navy "spokesman" is quoted as stating that such encounters have not been "officially" verified, except for the fact that "contacts" with Communist submarines have been made in the past months.

It appears from information available to OCI that this press story is the result of inaccurate and/or misleading reporting.

In early October two Soviet submarines, two destroyers and two minesweepers were sighted by a naval patrol plane, while proceeding across the Yellow Sea to the Chinese naval base at Tsingtao. Although these two submarines and two to four others may have been turned over to the Chinese by the Soviets, no further contact at sea with any of these boats has been reported. Although the USSR maintains a small force of coastal submarines at Port Arthur, no contact at sea with any of these vessels has been reported in recent months.

During the past several years, a great number of naval and air force patrol flights have been made over the Sea of Japan and the northwest Pacific for the purpose of conducting a surveillance of Soviet shipping. In some instances Soviet submarines

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have been sighted, but such sightings have not increased recently, as the press article implies. In no case has any of these sightings occurred in areas remote from Soviet waters.

The Office of Naval Intelligence believes that Chinese Communist submarines have not yet conducted long patrols out of their bases at Tsingtao, although their crews probably are approaching a state of training whereby such patrols might soon be undertaken. Similarly, the Soviet Far East submarine force, which has increased its long-range component in recent years, does not appear to have conducted any long patrols outside of Soviet waters. Such patrols might reasonably be expected in the future, however, as the Soviet naval construction program is producing large numbers of long-range ocean patrol submarines.

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